

REMARKS

Entry of the amendments to the specification, claims and abstract before examination of the application is respectfully requested. These claims have been amended to reflect U.S. practice and to more clearly describe the subject matter of the present invention.

If there are any questions regarding this Preliminary Amendment or this application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald D. Evenson  
Registration No. 26,160

Christopher T. McWhinney  
Registration No. 42,875

Date: January 20, 2004

CROWELL & MORING, LLP  
Intellectual Property Group  
P.O. Box 14300  
Washington, DC 20044-4300  
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500  
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844

DDE/CTM/lw

299812